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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/568,209

11/06/2006

John Rodney Keats

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EXAMINER

WILLIAMS, MONICA L

ART UNIT

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PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/568,209	<b>Applicant(s)</b> KEATS, JOHN RODNEY	
	<b>Examiner</b> MONICA L. WILLIAMS	<b>Art Unit</b> 3644	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 October 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 72-91 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 72-91 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 13 February 2007 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |                                                                                      |                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)          | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)           |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____                                      |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)          | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____                                                          | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                          |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Specification***

1. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: on page 8, under the Description of the Preferred Embodiments, line 3, “plant plot 1” should be changed to “plant pot” (emphasis added).

Appropriate correction is required.

### ***Drawings***

2. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the elongated body and pump must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as “amended.” If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either “Replacement Sheet” or “New

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Sheet” pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 72-74, 76-81, and 83-90 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stone (GB 2,369,980 A) in view of Lund (5,555,676).

5. In re claims 72-74 as best understood from applicant’s disclosure, with reference to Figures 1 and 3 and page 4 paragraph 5, Stone discloses a plant pot which, in use, is adapted to be stacked with one or more similar plant pots, the plant pot comprising a cavity (10) defined by a bottom wall and a side wall of the plant pot, and overflow outlet adapted to enable excess liquid to flow out of the cavity, and elongate body, a substantially centrally located aperture adapted to have the elongated body pass through the bottom wall, and a recess formed in the bottom wall opposite the cavity. Not disclosed is a pump in fluid communication with the elongate body.

6. However, with reference to Figure 1, col.4 lines 48-52, and col.5 lines 40-42, Lund discloses a stacked plant array comprising a cavity (16), an elongate body (42,20) comprising a perforated (22) pipe, and a pump (40) being in fluid communication with

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the elongated body. The advantage of this is to deliver the excess water in the cavity below to the plants above. Thus it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the plant pot of Stone to include a pump as taught by Lund in order to recycle the water in the cavity to the plant.

7. In re claim 76, with reference to Figures 1 and 3 and page 4 paragraph 5, Stone discloses a separation means (24) adapted to separate the water reservoir region from the soil holding region in the cavity.

8. In re claim 77, with reference to Figure 1, Stone discloses the water reservoir region (26) is laterally defined, at least partially, by a side wall of the plant pot.

9. In re claim 78, with reference to Figure 1, Stone discloses the water reservoir region (26) is laterally defined, at least partially, by a dam wall (22) located inwardly of the side wall.

10. In re claim 79, with reference to Figure 1, Stone discloses the dam wall (22) extends upwardly from a base of the plant pot.

11. In re claim 80, with reference to Figure 1, Stone discloses the dam wall (22) substantially follows the contour of the side wall of the plant pot.

12. In re claim 81, with reference to Figure 1, Stone discloses the water reservoir region (26) is laterally defined by a combination of both the side wall of the plant pot and the dam wall (22).

13. In re claim 83, with reference to Figure 1, Stone discloses the overflow outlet comprises one or more holes in an upper portion of the dam wall (22), the entire top of the dam wall having a hole in it.

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14. In re claim 84, with reference to Figure 1, Stone discloses the overflow outlet comprises a gap between the upper rim of the dam wall (22) and the separation means (24).

15. In re claim 85, Stone, as modified by Lund, discloses the claimed invention except for the separation means seated on the dam wall.

16. However, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the dam wall (22) of Stone as modified by Lund to reach the separation means (24) for added support and only have a portion of the dam wall comprise one or more grooves, bites, cut-outs, or slots in the upper rim of the dam wall to drain the water.

17. In re claim 86, with reference to Figure 1, Stone discloses an overflow chamber adapted to receive excess water from the reservoir region (26).

18. In re claim 87, with reference to Figure 1, Stone discloses the overflow chamber includes a drainage outlet (18) for water to drain therethrough.

19. In re claim 88, with reference to Figure 1, Stone discloses the overflow chamber is laterally defined by an outer surface of the dam wall (22) and at least a portion of the side wall.

20. In re claim 89, with reference to Figure 1 and page 4 paragraph 4, Stone discloses soil watering means (M) adapted to transfer water from the water reservoir region (26) to the soil holding region (12).

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21. In re claim 90, with reference to Figure 1 and page 4 paragraph 4, Stone discloses the soil watering means (M) comprises an absorbent wick which extends between the water reservoir region (26) and the soil holding region (12).

22. Claim 75 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stone (GB 2,369,980 A) in view of Lund (5,555,676) as applied to claims 72-74, 76-81, and 83-90 above, and further in view of Russell (196,937).

23. In re claim 75, Stone as modified by Lund disclose the claimed invention except for a saucer plate.

24. However, with reference to Figure 1, Russell discloses a plant pot with a saucer plate disposed below the bottom wall and shaped and configured to retain liquid flowing out of the cavity from the overflow outlet. The advantage of this is to prevent spills. Thus it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the plant pot of Stone as modified by Lund with the saucer plate as taught by Russell in order to prevent spills.

25. Claim 82 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stone (GB 2,369,980 A) in view of Lund (5,555,676) as applied to claims 72-74, 76-81, and 83-90 above, and further in view of Johnson, Sr. (3,452,475).

26. In re claim 82, Stone, as modified by Lund, discloses the claimed invention except for the overflow outlet comprising one or more holes in the side wall.

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27. However, with reference to Figure 1 and col.2 lines 71-72, Johnson, Sr. discloses providing over flow apertures (43) in the side walls. The advantage of this is to drain more excess water out. Thus it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have overflow outlet comprising one or more holes in the side wall of Stone as taught by Johnson, Sr. in order to drain more excess water out.

28. Claim 91 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stone (GB 2,369,980 A) in view of Lund (5,555,676) as applied to claims 72-74, 76-81, and 83-90 above, and further in view of Keats (WO 1998/056233 A).

29. In re claim 91, Stone, as modified by Lund, discloses the claimed invention except for a plurality of radially extending lobe section and bridge sections.

30. However, with reference to Figure 1, Keats discloses a plant pot with a plurality of radially extending lobe sections (11) and bridge sections (13), the bridge sections connecting the lobe sections. The advantage of this is for stacking pots and draining water to the subsequent lower pots. Thus it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have provided the pot of Stone as modified by Lund with a plurality of radially extending lobe section and bridge sections as taught by Keats as an alternative way to stack the pots and drain water to the subsequent lower pots.



***Response to Arguments***

31. Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

***Conclusion***

32. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MONICA L. WILLIAMS whose telephone number is (571)270-3113. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon to Fri 6:00-3:30, Alternate Friday off, EST.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael Mansen can be reached on 571-272-6608. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Yvonne R. Abbott/  
for Michael Mansen, SPE of Art  
Unit 3644

MW 12/30/08